

## **HB0061 - Charter Counties-Enforcement of Local Building Performance Laws (Building Energy Performance Standards Act of 2022)**

**Date: January 19, 2022**

**Committee: House Environment & Transportation Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

**Victoria Venable, Maryland Director**

**Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund**

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, I urge a favorable report from the committee on HB61 - **Charter Counties-Enforcement of Local Building Performance Laws (Building Energy Performance Standards Act of 2022)**. HB61 provides local governments with the ability to adequately enforce building energy performance standards by providing more flexibility in setting penalties.


The CCAN Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a grassroots organization dedicated exclusively to fighting for bold and just solutions to climate change in the Chesapeake region of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. In addition to advocating for state-level policy, CCAN and CCAN AF work with local leaders in county-level climate action. One area where county and local involvement is particularly important is in the buildings sector.

Because buildings emit 40% of Maryland's greenhouse gases (13% of which are direct emissions) and account for 90% of Maryland's electricity use, improving building energy performance and transitioning buildings to be carbon neutral is a critical tool in reaching Maryland's climate commitments - a core recommendation of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. Many counties in Maryland have begun enacting building energy performance standards. Unfortunately, the existing penalty cap outlined in Maryland law makes many of these standards ineffective because it is too low to compel building owners to comply.

Currently in Maryland, charter county penalties are limited to a civil penalty of no more than \$1,000 or a criminal penalty of \$1,000 and six months imprisonment. HB0061 will allow a penalty of up to \$10 per square foot of gross area for owners who fail to comply with local building energy performance standard regulations. This change allows existing

regulations to better target buildings that are actively harming the environment by failing to comply with building energy performance standards.

Thank you for your consideration of HB61. We at CCAN Action Fund believe that effective climate action requires coordination between all levels of government. HB61 is an example of better coordination by making necessary adjustments of state policy to provide the enforcement tools needed to make local building energy performance standards successful. For all the reasons stated above, we urge a favorable vote from the committee.



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